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BUSH, KERRY

DEAD END ROAD OF ELECTORAL POLITICS

BOTH PARTIES SERVE CAPITALISM

The swelling movement to dump George Bush is headed down the dead-end road of electoral politics because it doesn't attack the profit system itself. It doesn't matter that the majority of the anti-Bush camp are well-meaning people disgusted by this bosses' bloody oil war. Fundamentally, the electoral alternative, John Kerry, can't and won't change a thing, for it's capitalism's relentless competition for resources, markets and cheap labor that brought the U.S. war machine to Iraq and Afghanistan.

It's the need of every capitalist to be more ruthless than his rivals that led to the Abu Ghraib prison atrocities. Profits and the competitive advantage that come from control of Middle-Eastern oil dictate the main lines of U.S. policy today. The personalities of the politicians involve only superficial differences. Sure, Bush & Co. lied their way into invading Iraq, but "regime change" in Baghdad, by force if necessary, was a stated goal of Gore's 2000 campaign, the logical extension of Clinton's starvation sanctions and bombing effort.

Kerry is a loyal servant of the major U.S. capitalists just like Bush and Cheney and Gore and Clinton. Given the greater popular support that Democrats can muster, a Kerry administration would waste even more working-class lives than the Bush gang has in defending Exxon Mobil's bottom line. Recall that Kerry launched his candidacy in the shadow of the enshrined USS Yorktown promising, "We will defend our national security and maintain a military that is the strongest armed force on earth" (speech, 9/2/03).

Three months later in New York, war-maker Kerry pledged his allegiance to the dominant Rockefeller-Exxon Mobil-JP Morgan Chase wing of U.S. capital at its policy-setting Council on Foreign Relations: "As president, I will not cede our security to any nation or to any institution, and adversaries will have no doubt of my resolve to use force if necessary" (speech 12/3/03).

To help Kerry hammer out the details of this bloodshed for profit, U.S. rulers have surrounded him with a team of seasoned war criminals. It includes Ashton Carter and Sandy Berger, who advised Clinton in his Serbian butchery, and Lawrence Korb, an old Reagan hand, who now sees the liberals' war schemes as even more lethal. (As we go to press, Berger has resigned as a Kerry advisor because of a scandal involving his stealing classified documents.) Helping draft the Democrats' 2004 platform, Carter, while splitting semantic hairs, revealed that attacking U.S. rivals without provocation would be Kerry's policy, too. "Carter said the Democrats are not seeking to end the use of pre-emption.... 'It's the difference between pre-emption as a doctrine and pre-emption as an option.'" (New York Times, 7/3).

Berger declared that although Democrats would like to have foreign allies, if oil was at stake they would again go to war virtually alone. "A Democratic administration must reassert the determination of the United States to use military force — unilaterally, if necessary —to defend its vital interests." (Le Monde Diplomatique, July 2004)

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COSBY BLAMES VICTIMS AS RACIST UNEMPLOYMENT BECOMES A CATASTROPHE

On May 17, comedian Bill Cosby spoke at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., celebrating the 50th anniversary of Brown vs. Board of Education, the Supreme Court ruling banning segregation in the public schools. Cosby, who is black, denounced low-income black parents, stating, "People marched and were hit in the face with rocks to get an education, and now you have these knuckleheads walking around.... The lower economic people are not holding up their end of the deal. These people are not parenting."

"I am talking about these people," Cosby continued, "who cry when their son is standing there in an orange suit [i.e., prison garb]. Where were you when he was two? Where were you when he was twelve? Where were you when he was eighteen, and how come you didn't know that he had a pistol? And where is his father?"

Later, at a Rainbow Coalition gathering, Cosby made similar comments, with Reverend Jesse Jackson standing next to him. Cosby's remarks have been supported by people ranging from Al Sharpton (N.Y. Times Magazine, 7/18) to right-wing honcho Pat Buchanan who, in his column titled, "Cosby Reads the Riot Act," (www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=39417), praises Cosby for saying "White America" is not the culprit regarding racism. By "White America," Pat B. means capitalism.

But multi-millionaire Cosby, who forgot his working-class background in Philadelphia, does his main damage by blaming the victims of racism. Sure, some youth are sucked in by the anti-social and sexist cul-

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The Only Real Regime Change is to Dump Capitalism

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Korb, who shares Rumsfeld's strategic goals, stands as his tactical opposite. Instead of the Bush gang's practice of making war "on the cheap" with "off-the-shelf" forces, Korb wants to add two divisions, 40,000 troops, to the Army immediately and, after reversing Bush's tax cuts, to continue a long-haul beefing-up of ground forces. And Kerry himself, vowing an open-ended occupation of Iraq, told the Wall Street Journal (7/16) that "instead of acting promptly to reduce strength, he...would consult with military commanders to determine how many more troops might be needed in the near term to safeguard Iraq."

To put and end to this slaughter, it's not enough to change the occupant of the White House. Capitalism has to be destroyed and replaced with rule by the working class.✪

Kerry Solidarity is With Racist Cops

Despite his ruling-class background, Kerry claims to be a friend of the working class, because he refused to cross a 'picket line' in Boston on June 28. What a farce! The picket line in question was led by the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association, which is demanding more overtime pay at the Democrats' July convention. The day before, two Boston cops had killed Bert Bowen, a black motorist, with two bullets to the back of the head. Kerry knew it. His act signified solidarity with the racist killer cops, not with the working class. Thomas Nee, president of the cop "union," gushed about Kerry, "He's on a pedestal in my eyes." (AP, 6/29)

The feeling is mutual. Kerry had earlier vowed, "I will restore funding for [the Clinton administration's] COPS program to realize its mission of putting 100,000 [additional] police on the street [and] create a Homeland Security Corps." The 110,000-member International Union of Police Associations already has endorsed Kerry. The liberal agenda for the coming years calls for a harsher police state, as well as ever deadlier overseas military adventures. Kerry is both a fascist and a war-maker.✪

NGO'S ARE GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

In our July 21 issue, we described how the World Social Forum grew out of the ruling class's reaction to the increasingly militant opposition to the effects of globalization — imperialism — with the aim of channeling the militancy into reforming capitalism, if possible, to favor one set of imperialists over the others.

The Porto Alegre Forum itself was deemed such a success it spawned a number of smaller ones in Argentina, Europe, Palestine, Africa and now Boston. Since these forums are centered around NGO's (Non-Governmental Organizations), we should examine this modern phenomenon.

Firstly, the "N" in "NGO" must be erased. These are governmental and capitalist organizations from the get-go. Writer James Petras notes, "Today there are at least 50,000 NGO's in the Third World receiving more than $10 billion in funding from international financial institutions, European, U.S., and Japanese government agencies and local governments." The World Bank, for example, has over 80 staff members devoted to relations with various NGO's and the majority of its projects include governmental participation.

In fact, as grass-root organizations NGO's are perhaps the biggest social rivals among the world's workers to the building of a communist party. There is a direct relationship between the decline of living standards and the growth of NGO's. Instead of revolution for workers' power, of class consciousness or strikes and rebellions against imperialism, NGO's tend to organize survival strategies like the village bank movement in South America, or the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh — banks that give credit exclusively to the poor. NGO's emphasize projects, not movements. There is a direct relationship between the decline of the old communist movement and the growth of NGO's. They present individual, not mass, class solutions and for all their isolated successes, the poverty and misery of the world's workers has deepened.

Whereas communists agitate, educate and organize workers to change the world, NGO's promote the ultimate institution of class oppression and the status quo — charity. In place of vibrant, often heated struggle over the communist movement's line (democratic centralism), NGO's submit to the controlling power of capital. Their very existence depends on securing a grant from some capitalist or other, and every idea is subordinated to that aim.

Yet their most important service to the imperialists lies in the line they push. Repeatedly, they — especially the Ford Foundation-supported NGO's — emphasize identity politics: gender, ethnicity, caste, nationality, race, instead of class. It is here above anywhere else that the post-modernism (and its notion of "civil" societies) so favored by Humanity research grants at U.S. universities gets introduced to the working class.

Identity politics divides the working class until it is so weak it can only fight among itself. It's up to communists to show that when the working class unites with communist (not socialist) politics, it will be the most powerful force on the face of the earth. Workers need CLASS consciousness!

As we work in these NGO's alongside many honest volunteers, we must formulate demands that highlight the potential power of a united working class. We must expect and welcome a struggle over these ideas — a struggle we should also aim to win. "Workers of the World, unite! We have nothing to lose but our chains." We have a communist world to win!✪

Cosby Blames Victims, Not System's Racist Unemployment

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ture pushed by the big record companies and movie studios owned by big capitalists. But interestingly enough, while Cosby & Co. are blaming young blacks and their parents for all kinds of evils, the fact is that crime has actually gone down, particularly in the inner cities. Pregnancy among black teenagers is also declining (See Red Eye page 7).

The ugly reality of racism was clearly seen in a column by N.Y. Times writer Bob Herbert, titled An Emerging Catastrophe: "The slow death of the hopes, pride and well-being of huge numbers of African-Americans is going unnoticed by most other Americans and by political leaders of both parties."

Herbert quotes a new study of black male employment trends showing that by the year 2002, one of every four black men in the U.S. was idle all year long. This unemployment rate is four times that of white males. The study's author, Andrew Sum, head of the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northwestern Univ., says that it's possible this unemployment rate is even higher since it did not consider homeless black men or black men in jail (10% of black males under 40 are incarcerated).

CHALLENGE has reported many times on the racist character of U.S. unemployment and that the recent so-called job creations are based on faulty statistics. Moreover, most of the new jobs created pay barely above the minimum. The Times (7/18) reported that wages are trailing prices (inflation), amounting to a wage-cut. For low-paid workers, making ends meet is now an impossibility.

Racism is an integral part of capitalism, and of U.S. capitalism in particular. Some like Cosby and Sharpton might make it, but for most black workers and youth, and most workers in general, capitalism holds a future of endless wars, police terror, mass unemployment and rotten jobs. Karl Marx said over 150 years ago that "labor in white skin will never be free as long as labor in black skin is in chains." That's why PLP fights racism, as the key way to unite all workers to destroy this system. Under communism, racism will be banned, and racists will be prosecuted, along with apologists like Cosby.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of the profit system, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.

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PLP BLASTS AFT PRO-WAR, PRO-BOSS LEADERSHIP

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 18 — Progressive Labor Party played a significant role in opposing the anti-communist union leadership's support for the bosses' imperialist war at the 2004 convention of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) July 14-17. We fought the idea of watering down the anti-war resolutions in order to "win" the vote on the floor. The leadership recognizes that the great majority of delegates are against the war so they did their best to compromise these sentiments. Winning is not passing a resolution; it's winning other workers to fight for our class — opposing imperialist war and racism and opening people's minds to the need for communist revolution.

We distributed over 300 CHALLENGES and gave out 5,000 copies of four different PLP leaflets to the 3,000 delegates, both inside and outside the convention hall. The leaflets condemned "Kerry's call for 40,000 more troops in Iraq and his National Service plan to send working-class youth to fight other workers in a war for U.S. bosses' control of oil" and expand the war with a UN fig leaf; blasted the fascist Patriot Act; and proposed a solution of destroying the capitalist system and creating a whole, new communist world.

At committee meetings we attacked the fascist and nationalistic nature of some resolutions, and pointed out that unilateralist Bush and multi-lateralist Kerry are both war-makers. We helped raise anti-war banners during Kerry's speech and later when an anti-war amendment was being debated.

A loose coalition of anti-war delegates received significant political leadership from the head of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), the local at the City University of New York. However, as a vice-president of the national union and member of the AFT's Executive Council, she seriously compromised and weakened the anti-war forces, calling on members of her own local not to act independently and hold up anti-war flags made of AFT flags; she didn't want to struggle on the Executive Council about the flags. She ultimately accepted a change in a pro-war resolution which weakened the anti-war arguments.

She did all this in order to "win." But winning is upping the ante of class struggle, strengthening the working class and moving to the left, not watering down the politics in order to pass a resolution.

Randi Weingarten, president of the New York City local (the UFT) engineered the compromise on the "anti-war" resolution. However, she has opposed every anti-war or pro-working-class resolution PLP and its friends have brought to the UFT's monthly Delegate Assemblies. But here, speaking for this compromise, Weingarten painted herself as "anti-war," as a "friend of the working class."

Given, the vast anti-war majority at the convention, Weingarten pushed the politically mildest resolution, the only one about the war brought to the floor of the general session. (The other resolutions died in committee.) In order to win the mass of the delegates to the rest of the AFT's lousy politics, Weingarten understands that enough of an "anti-war" position must be advanced so the delegates will think the union's on the right side.

But we need to fight for the most principled, boldest political line possible. Winning a vote in conventions like this isn't winning. Winning workers to see capitalism's need for war and therefore the necessity for revolution is winning. And, in fact, we made a number of contacts: a group of community college teachers who want to meet with the party and teacher's representative's from a couple of other countries.

One of the community college delegates who had been at the last convention in Las Vegas informed a Party teacher that when he returned from that one he told his colleagues the only people who had anything worthwhile to say were the communists.

Party members moved politically closer to their base, who were able to see us in action. They also saw the corruption and bankruptcy of the union leadership. We engaged our friends in political struggle. Out of this we are creating the necessary ties that will lay the foundation for the revolutionary movement we are building.✪

PL'ers Tell NEA Convention:

'It's Not Just Bush, It's Capitalism'

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 19 — PLP was on the move at the National Education Association Convention, attended by over 17,000 guests and delegates. We distributed over 2,000 PLP leaflets and 135 CHALLENGES, and organized with our friends in fighting racism and imperialist war. Members and friends got signatures on our resolutions, raised issues in caucuses and delegations and worked with a group called the "Education, Not Incarceration" coalition.

Many delegates asked about our "It's Not Just Bush, It's Capitalism" pins and "Don't Vote, Revolt" T-shirts which we proudly wore as we organized. Because of our public presence and intense conversations, we spread the fight against capitalism, war and racism, having deep talks about the draft, national service and the plans of the bosses — including John Kerry — to lead us deeper into fascism. We put forward communism as the solution to the bosses' wars and racism, explaining how the capitalists want to spend tons of money on war and imprisoning people, particularly black and Latino workers, instead of meeting our needs, including education.

Our proposal to oppose the harassment of our "brother unionist and communist, Derek Pearl and other teachers…in New York City" for political activism was referred to the Executive Committee, but we were able to speak to it in state delegations and on the floor. We advanced a resolution linking the racist tortures in U.S. prisons to those in Iraq. Although it was tabled, it sparked a heated debate in which we participated in the California delegation. We also spoke on the anti-racist resolution attacking the prosecution of youth as adults, and participated in the call for withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

Our main resolution opposed the ruling class' plans for a draft. Both Democrats and Republicans will likely be forced to institute compulsory military service after the election to carry out their long-term plans for imperialist war for oil profits and U.S. world domination. Kerry wants "national service" as a prerequisite to receiving financial aid for college — a draft in sheep's clothing. There was a sharp debate over this motion in the California delegation. We forced the issue and won the right for delegates to vote as they wished when it got to the floor, instead of being tied to the leadership's position.

At the same time, we recognize that however the ruling class expands its military, it offers communists even more opportunities to win youth to oppose the imperialists' wars, both inside and outside the armed forces.

We had a healthy debate with many people over putting forward sharp politics vs. "winning on the floor." Some non-Party resolutions that were weakened lost anyway. Although we may have brought up too many resolutions, we deepened our relationships and struggle with friends from our cities and made new contacts.

Our attack against the Democrats' nefarious war plans was diluted, but every resolution from "Education, Not Incarceration" attacked racism, which strengthened our ties with our friends. We should have organized a PL forum on smashing this system, fighting for communism, and the phony electoral system, particularly when the NEA leadership was so intensively backing Kerry. We must struggle with our friends for our whole line and not back down or be pulled to the right in the face of their disagreements.

We will continue to grow and improve throughout the coming year, right up to the next convention in Los Angeles. Teachers and students, don't be sucked into backing the Kerry imperialists. Organize against racism and capitalism and fight for communism! ✪

GI's Debate Nationalism, God, Drugs, Bush/Kerry and Capitalism

(*The previous two articles in this series reported on the involvement of sailors and marines in some practical work and on their participation in a May Day event.*)

A mother who traveled with us to May Day and whose son was a victim of police brutality, was so enthused by our activities that she invited me and my new friends from the barracks to her house for dinner on Mothers Day. One buddy from the Navy and two Marines came with me. We feasted on all the food and drink you wanted and delicious deserts. Navy chow can't compare to this kitchen!

Afterwards we all sat in the living room just cooling out. My black nationalist friend kicked off the discussion again, on PLP's line on nationalism. He said he agreed with it, but didn't think it was practical, that it couldn't work. He raised the issue of culture. I said the Party respects different cultures, but there's a difference between people eating certain foods, listening to certain music or wearing certain clothes as against the borders that separate people.

Then the conversation turned to whether the Party respects people's religion. I stated that ultimately our Party hopes to win people away from relying on "God" or external forces to solve their problems. We look to the masses, the working class, not God for solutions, and that this would be a long-term struggle but one we believe can be won. I used myself as an example, being raised in the church and at one point believing there was a "God." We agreed to disagree on this

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Youth Can Play Crucial Role in New Emerging Industrial Working Class

"Anybody but Bush!" is the battle cry of the AFL-CIO. When workers and youth point out that Kerry offers only more war, police-state tactics and economic attacks on workers, the cynical union misleaders cry, "What alternative do we have?" They can't envision anything other than their dog-eat-dog capitalist system.

Communist revolution is the only way out of this death spiral. Even understanding this truth, the question remains, "How do we get there?" This becomes particularly pointed because of the body blows our movement has suffered at the hands of revisionism (phony leftists) and the demise of the old communist movement. We are small and the bosses are powerful.

But the bosses have an Achilles heel. They must mobilize vast armies of industrial workers and soldiers to manufacture and wield the arms necessary to defend their imperialist empire. The Iraq fiasco is already testing the loyalty of these key sections of the working class.

The future holds increasing challenges to U.S. imperialist dominance. More wars, leading over the long haul to world war, are in the cards. The political consciousness of the masses of industrial workers and soldiers can write our history, forging the trail for the whole working class. Getting jobs among the new wave of industrial workers is one of the most useful things young revolutionaries can do with their lives.

PLAY THE CARDS YOU'RE DEALT

According to the Industrial Union Council of the AFL-CIO, there is a "crisis" in the "manufacturing base for national defense and homeland security" because "American firms [are moving] factories and jobs overseas." In truth, there is a crisis among the old-line industrial unions as their membership plummets. The International Association of Machinists (IAM) now counts only 375,000 on its rolls, down from over a million at its peak. The other once-giant industrial unions share a similar fate, but the absolute numbers of U.S. manufacturing workers has remained fairly stable at between 15 and 20 million since 1965.

There are, however, structural changes in the industrial working class we cannot ignore in order to continue communist work among these key workers. The labor department reports that 7 of 10 manufacturing jobs "outsourced" were actually given to U.S.-based subcontractors. The majority of industrial workers now work for these "outside suppliers." The "just-in-time" production system forms an instantaneous connection from supplier to the main assembly plants, while intensifying the "rate of exploitation." These subcontractors are frequently big conglomerates, likely to be non-union, often paying meager wages with scant benefits, while requiring long hours of dangerous work. A mere 8% of the private sector is now unionized.

Large groups of these workers are Latin immigrants, millions of whom work in Southern California and Texas. Some of these subcontractors are situated around the old industrial plants. Others have located in various Southern and Southwestern states employing larger numbers of black workers. These workers tend to be much younger than the old-line unionized workers, whose age averages near 50. These outside suppliers are growing and will mushroom as the needs of U.S. imperialism and its endless wars dictate.

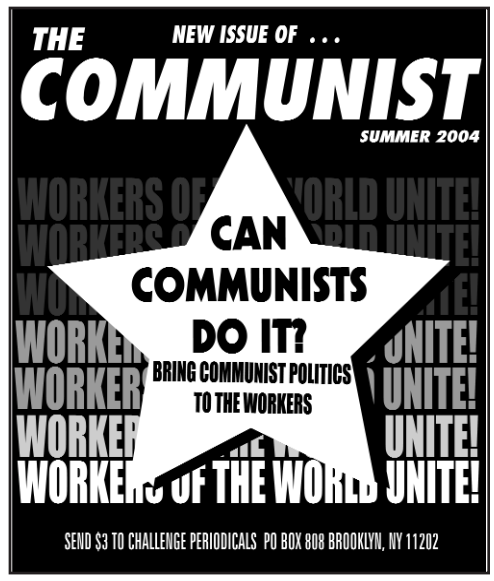
This is the fascist grinding-down of the industrial working class, necessary for the bosses to deal with increasingly expensive wars to maintain U.S. dominance in the face of expanding imperialist competition.

LIFETIMES OF REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

"The bosses are creating their own gravediggers," is how one veteran worker described these new, young industrial workers. The present situation is similar to that of the 1930's, when large groups of immigrant workers who had been exposed to revolutionary ideas in their native countries, helped form the first U.S. industrial unions.

Ultimately, it was the old communist movement's politics that motivated these workers, for good and for bad. To get it right this time, we must be among these new industrial workers with our anti-reformist line, as well as sharpen the work in the old-line union plants.

Our scientific understanding of the key role of industrial workers and soldiers runs counter to the ruling-class propaganda. When the bosses are not telling us to "Look out for #1," they're also protesting that the working class "doesn't matter anymore." The trade unions do their part by locking us into dead-end reform politics and the Democratic Party.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But revolutionary politics can point the way toward anti-racist, anti-sexist class struggle, uniting the older, more unionized workforce in the "traditional" plants with the millions of younger, more black and Latin and women workers in the subcontracting plants. The largely immigrant workers in the supplier plants offer a gateway to spread communist politics throughout the worldwide industrial working class.

Bringing our revolutionary politics to this new wave of industrial workers will write the future of history. Every Party member can help. We cannot allow reformist trade unionism or physical separation to keep us from these workers. We are in this for the long haul. Young comrades and friends can live "lives of meaning" by going into these supplier plants to work, live and struggle with this new wave of industrial workers. Lifetimes of revolutionary struggle point the way to the liberation of our class.✪

A Case In Point

The production of Boeing's new 7E7 jet is a case in point. Washington State paid the company over $3.2 billion to secure a mere 800 to 1,200 union jobs assembling prefabricated modules in Everett. In addition, a few hundred young workers will soon be hired by subcontractors in Washington State to supply final assembly.

Many more will be hired in Texas and California, as well as overseas, making those sub-assemblies. Texas won the biggest 7E7 supplier prize, a manufacturing plant where Alenia of Italy and Dallas-based Vought will attach the rear fuselage of the airplane to the tail. In late June, the president of the Snohomish (Washington) County Economic Development Council confirmed that another supplier would search for a 200-employee facility in Texas and North Carolina because of cheaper labor. Boeing is completely eliminating its Seattle area fabrication division, keeping only a small section for emergencies and specialty work — such as making scab parts should a "just-in-time" supplier strike!✪

Daimler-Chrysler Strikers Fight Germans Bosses' 4th Reich

BERLIN, July 20 — On July 15, some 60,000 DaimlerChrysler (DC) workers held a series of strikes and other actions to protest company plans to cut their wages and extend their working hours. At DC's main Sindelfingen complex in Stuttgart, 20,000 workers struck the early shift and then held a mass protest rally. At the nearby Untertürkheim plant, 10,000 walked out on the late shift. Other actions hit DC plants nationwide.

DC executives are now pretending they're also "making sacrifices," saying they'll accept pay cuts too. Sure, these do-nothing, high-paid bosses who average 3.7 million euros ($4.6 million) annually, among the richest in Europe, may lose a few bucks but the standard of living of hard-working workers will really sink.

Germany's big bosses are trying to cut their labor costs (similar to bosses worldwide, particularly in the U.S.) to be able to compete in the dog-eat-dog world of imperialist competition. German manufacturing labor costs average "roughly $33 per hour, compared with $22 an hour in the U.S." (Wall Street Journal, 7/19).

In their drive to make workers pay, German bosses are being helped by the union leaders. In fact, IG Metall, Europe's largest industrial union, has seats on the Board of Directors of DC and many other companies. All German bosses now feel the winds blowing in their favor after the IG Metall union agreed to increase working hours at Siemens, the cell phone company. It had threatened to move some of its operations to Eastern Europe, where labor costs are much cheaper.

Already, IG Metall has offered to give back 180 million euros ($225 million) it had negotiated in their last DC wage agreement. The union will also give up a 2.6% wage hike negotiated for 2006. But DC also wants to chop about 3% of its German labor force. for a total cutback of 500 million euros ($622 million).

The attacks are spreading to other countries. Workers at a parts plant in France owned by the German outfit Bosch "dealt a blow to the country's law limiting the working week to 35 hours, as they unilaterally accepted demands from the private German automotive group to work longer for the same pay." (Financial Times, 7/20)

Since the Soviet Union's collapse, German bosses are building their 4th Reich, turning many former Soviet bloc countries into their sphere of influence. Their swallowing of Slovenia and Croatia initiated the disbanding of the former Yugoslavia. Now, the French-German led European Union is extending its tentacles to other Eastern European countries, competing mainly with the U.S., shipping jobs to these low-cost former Soviet bloc nations. They're following the Nazi road of using Eastern Europe as a source of slave labor-type exploitation.

This is the price better-paid workers are paying for the class collaboration and anti-communism of their union leaders, and for the right-wing opportunism and reformism of the old Communist Parties of Western Europe. The key now is to turn the anger of workers like those at DC into schools of communism, to build a new revolutionary communist leadership capable of defeating all the bosses' attacks. That's what we in PLP are fighting for.✪

Subcontracted Workers' Wildcat Sparks Solidarity Strike Across Italy

The potential for our revolutionary politics can be seen in the recent 21-day wildcat by 5,000 FIAT workers in Melfi, Italy, sparked by strikers in smaller supply plants. The latter are linked to the high-tech Melfi plant by the "just-in-time" production system. The subcontractor workers demanded wage parity with the rest of FIAT workers, an end to the bosses' reign of terror inside the plant and to the grueling rotating schedule that forces 12 consecutive work-days without a break.

On April 26, tens of thousands responded to a police attack on the Melfi wildcatters by striking 100 plants in the Turin region and another 100 in the Brescia province, forcing a 4-hour nationwide auto and steel solidarity strike on April 28. In FIAT's biggest plant, in Turin, workers marched shouting, "Long live the methods of the Melfi strikers!"

Such struggle opens up questions of Italy's support for the Iraq war, the role of the State, and the very nature of the capitalist system. The bosses truly "create their own gravediggers" if we are there to struggle around PLP's revolutionary communist politics.✪

Red Politics Can Answer Attacks on Airline Workers

The third round of airline workers' give-backs took off June 28 when the government rejected United Airlines' bid for a $1.1 billion guaranteed loan. United revealed it will now demand wage, benefit and work-rule concessions totaling $2 to $2.5 billion to satisfy private lenders. Delta, Northwest and U.S. Airways, already in talks with their unions, upped their demands. American Airlines and Continental joined the stampede soon afterwards, demanding billions in concessions from their own beleaguered workers. This follows two cuts, after 9/11 and the Iraq war, totaling nearly $10 billion. Everyone from the New York Times to Business Week says these unprecedented cuts represent the beginning of structural change in the U.S. airline industry.

Imperialists — and would-be imperialists — must maintain robust airline industries. The vast majority of troops transported to every major U.S. war since Vietnam were flown in "drafted" civilian aircraft. Big domestic airlines help insure commercial jet production, which provides profits, investment capital and the technological know-how necessary for the aerospace war industry.

Since the dawn of the commercial jet, the U.S. was the "Western" world's undisputed leader in commercial traffic and production. Today, foreign airlines and manufacturers have caught up, making it harder for airline workers to make economic advances. In addition, the bosses need to grind down the industrial working class to pay for increasingly frequent wars to maintain their empire. Airline workers are the latest victims of inter-imperialist rivalry.

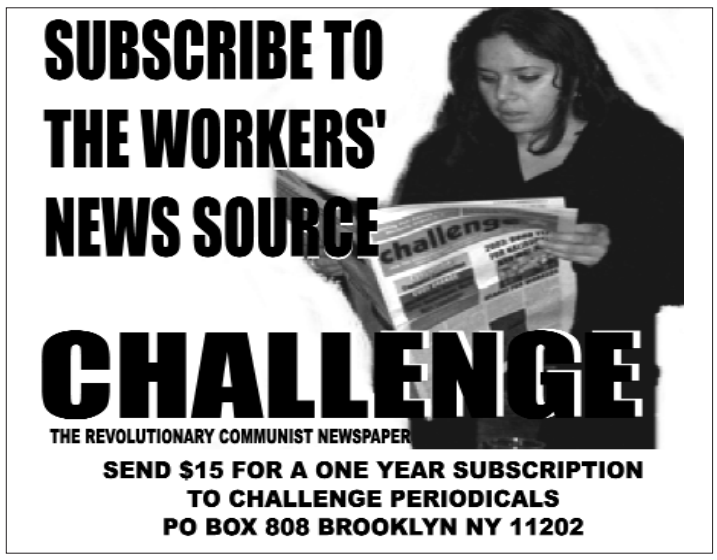
Like auto, steel and aerospace manufacturing, many airline workers are now non-union, centered in low-cost carriers like JetBlue. Subcontracting is mushrooming, while remaining workers are sped-up. "They [the bosses] have only one thing in mind, pressure people to work faster," said a Minneapolis IAM mechanic. Many airline employees now earn little more than the minimum, with new hiring geared toward part-time work. Pensions are being junked.

The airline workers' AFL-CIO affiliated unions were incapable of answering these attacks. Years of reformist, business unionism, plus the collapse of the old communist movement, have taken their toll. The class-collaborationist politics of the established unions precluded any kind of class-based counter-attack that would create the potential for greater revolutionary understanding amongst these important workers.

ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

Instead, anger at the ineffectual, established unions led to the rise of "independents." "There is almost 100 percent dissatisfaction with the union," said one ground service worker, a Detroit IAM member. This dissatisfaction caused tens of thousands of aircraft mechanics to decertify their AFL-CIO unions, replacing them with the "independent" Airlines Mechanic Fraternal Association (AMFA).

But the AMFA is no answer. Behind its militant sounding rhetoric lies a narrow craft perspective. The AMFA blames lower-paid baggage handlers and service workers for dragging down skilled labor — further dividing the working class. Instead of blaming lower-paid workers, union and non-union, we must look to these mostly black and Latin workers for leadership. As could be expected, when push came to shove, the AFMA also caved in to the cuts.



LONG, HOT SUMMER AT THE AIRPORTS

The fascist repression of the airline workers exposed the reformist union leaders, but this cannot spontaneously put us on the path to revolution. That road is a long one, requiring recruitment to PLP and much wider circulation of the communist analysis in CHALLENGE. Until we grasp the complete futility of reform and the potential for revolution, we will be forced down one dead-end road after another.

The New York Times is worried about a "Long Argumentative Summer" for the airlines. Such a long, hot summer provides an opportunity to advance this essential journey. The rise of revolutionary, communist class-consciousness should mark our progress. ✪

Workers' Solidarity Is Way to Fight Terror vs. Immigrants

LOS ANGELES, July 19 — "The workers who don't have legal documents should get off here because the Migra (Immigration Service) is at the bus stop two blocks ahead," warned an MTA bus driver. He'd been informed by another driver ahead of him on the same route about the Migra's presence.

This was an act of class-consciousness, of citizen workers' solidarity with brother and sister immigrant workers. Many of these undocumented workers supported these drivers and mechanics in their recent strike against the city and transit bosses. A few days later in another neighborhood, a group of youth warned motorists about a Migra checkpoint ahead, advising them to change their route.

Recently the INS, now part of the Dept. of Homeland Security, has carried out a wave of Nazi Gestapo-style raids in Southern California, from road checkpoints to the invasion of apartments, stores, garment factories and detentions in airports. The terror has led many families to avoid the streets, stores or parks, for fear of arrest. But necessity forces them to go to the factories.

The rulers have a big problem. They need a lot of money and a lot of soldiers for the current war for oil in Iraq and to control the Middle East. They're squeezing the money from super-exploiting us at work, and cutting social services, education and medical care. They plan to get the soldiers from our sons and daughters. They're using both terror and crumbs.

This terror reflects two tactics among U.S. bosses, one wanting to exploit undocumented workers, denying them benefits or social services, and others who think that terror combined with a few crumbs — drivers' licenses, amnesty, education or minimum health care — can squeeze even more from these immigrants.

These raids create an atmosphere of fascist police terror among the whole working class and serve to minimize class struggle in the factories or neighborhoods.

The liberal bosses and politicians are using some crumbs to "soften up" these 11,000,000 undocumented workers, to win them to willingly send their children into the army to fight and die in U.S. imperialist wars.

Recently a new group called ONE LA had its inaugural convention, with 11,000 Latino, black and Asian workers participating, the vast majority being Latino immigrants. ONE LA is organized by the Industrial Areas Foundation and led by churches (Catholic, Protestant and Jewish), some unions and community organizations. This group wants to spearhead a movement to "defend the oppressed." The convention's main emphasis was to rely on Democratic Party politicians and use the organization to turn out the vote.

All workers feel the whip of exploitation, at work and in our daily lives. We all aspire to live with dignity and respect. The whole working class has the power to change history and the future of our lives and our children's' lives. The power is in our communist political consciousness, especially at the point of production. We workers run the machines, the busses, the construction, hospitals, schools — everything.

Our future depends on strengthening and steeling the Progressive Labor Party. We've distributed thousands of leaflets denouncing the fascist raids, participated in marches, meetings, rallies and other actions, to be able to lead future struggles, not only against deportations or in the factories, but also to develop the strength to destroy the bosses and their murderous capitalist system.

We fight for a communist system in which there will be no borders, passports, exploitation or imperialist wars for profit. Workers and our allies among students should oppose the fascist raids and join the Progressive Labor Party to fight for the future of our class! ✪

Presidential 'Musical Chairs' Undercut Peru General Strike

LIMA, PERU, July 18 — A successful general strike of hundreds of thousands of Peru's workers erupted here on July 14 despite government militarization of the streets and its labeling the action "terrorist-infiltrated." Workers blocked roads with tires and logs in this capital city. At least 76 people were arrested when the police used tear-gas to disperse protesters.

The CGTP (the major union federations) organized the strike. While union officials said 90% of the working class supported it, many did not join for fear of losing a pay day or their jobs, even though they hate the government.

The workers were protesting the rotten economic conditions here. Peru has one of the fastest growing economies in Latin America, but half the population lives on $1.25 a day. According to BBC World News (7/14), people are angry at President Toledo's failure to keep his election promises to create more jobs and stamp out poverty.

Actually most people joined the strike to demand Toledo's resignation. CGTP head Mario Huaman said, "More than 85% of the population is demanding Toledo's ouster....The voice of the people is the word of God."

But the strike leadership — from the revisionist (fake leftist) union leaders to APRA, the leading capitalist opposition Party — has played this game before, of changing presidents but not changing anything else. Some of these same phony leftists supported Toledo when he was running against right-wing President Fujimori (now exiled in Japan).

The strike was seen by many mainly as a mobilization to elect APRA presidential candidate Alan Garcia in 2006. He was President in the 1980s, before Fujimori, and was not only thoroughly corrupt but also murdered hundreds of political prisoners.

Events in Peru mirror those in many other South American countries. The masses are angry and fighting back against the local rulers and their imperialist backers, but they lack the kind of leadership which can solve their misery and exploitation. That requires a revolutionary communist leadership. The best lesson workers and their allies can draw from these struggles is to turn them into schools for communism. ✪

LETTERS

COMMUNISM MEANS NO SELLOUTS

The victory of the PL'er in the Washington, D.C. bus driver's union presidential election is a great example to all of us. I noted his letter addressing the drivers' concerns about him being a communist and white in a predominantly African-American union.

But I would add one thing to his letter. Communists see the need to replace capitalism's love affair with profits with a system based on cooperation dedicated to making everyone's life better.

The reason to vote for a communist for a union position is that a communist sees the office as a means to achieving this end. S/he wants to recruit members of the union to join PLP and help lead a revolution. In order to do that, s/he must win the confidence and trust of the union members and demonstrate a willingness and ability to fight for their demands. That means that s/he will never sell out the members in their daily struggles because to do so would mean that the workers' trust and confidence in the PL leader would be gone and those workers will probably not join PLP and fight for communism.

A READER

Trace AIDS Epidemic to Capitalist Poverty

The mid-July AIDS conference in Thailand closed with little significant accomplishments. Conference reports in the U.S. and British press suggest that the focus was on the slow development of life-lengthening drugs and possible vaccines. The conference also acknowledged problems of poverty but nothing in any depth.

Its focus on drugs is a diversion. The AIDS epidemic has demonstrated that the key to prevention of any disease is a hearty immune system. This is always related to available food, preventative care, scientific knowledge among the people, exercise, clean water, and time — issues all tied to inequality and exploitation. A real vaccine is years, if not decades away, while the life-lengthening drugs only serve the user, while also prolonging the possibility of spreading exposure. But even in regard to the drugs, profits play a central role. U.S. pharmaceutical companies use their relationship with the U.S. government to cut off aid to any country that is using knock-off copies of U.S.-patented drugs, which in many cases cost 10% of what U.S. companies charge.

Graça Michel, Nelson Mandela's wife, closed the conference, saying it was a shame that in 2004, with 38 million suffering AIDS worldwide, not much has been accomplished. But her husband and his ruling African National Congress party are also part of the problem. Mandela vehemently disputed a key conference report that says people in South Africa are materially worse off now than they were under apartheid in terms of medical care, per-capita income, educational opportunities and life expectancy, down from around 65 to 49.

Mandela's lies about the treachery of his African National Congress and the South African fake "Communist" Party, cynically used the lives and struggles of people throughout the world to move their leaders into controlling sectors of SA capital. But they still must toady to the old apartheid capitalists, even refusing to issue proven retroviral drugs to pregnant women on the obscure grounds that their use might block the effectiveness of other drugs to be used later.

Cholera and TB are twins of the AIDS virus. Many governments, especially South Africa's, shift their statistics on AIDS to include deaths from TB and cholera which are presumably more acceptable. Thus, it's difficult to get a full picture of the impact of AIDS worldwide, though the common term "catastrophic epidemic with no end in sight" is widely used, and perhaps an understatement. At least 600 people a day die of reported AIDS in South Africa, a figure the government insists is unchanged over the last four years. That's extraordinarily unlikely, given that the government has done hardly anything to cut the figure. ANC cadres are quite unwilling to live or even work in the squatter camps.

AIDS wraps up all the problems of capitalism: the ruined relationship of people and nature; the roles of exploitation, profitability and alienation (men from women, women and men from children, all from all); the fear of non-exploitative sexual pleasure that is written into every religion; racism which makes the deaths of so many poor people "acceptable" in the imperialist world.

Thus world capitalism facilitates the spread of AIDS which thrives on barbarism, the logical workings of the capitalist system. However, this also necessarily creates resistance, as people must fight back to live.

Nevertheless, resistance to AIDS is at an extraordinarily low level — health workers, international human rights workers, and groups like Doctors Without Borders do not organize social movements. Without a revolutionary movement which raises the consciousness of people in all spheres, giving them a reason to live and sacrifice beyond the momentary needs of the "free market," AIDS will likely continue to prosper in its barbarized garden: capital.

A READER

Evil, Yes, Lesser No

During the AFT union convention, a Party teacher had the following discussion at a dinner with members of his city's delegation:

"So you're against Kerry?

"Yeah, but that does not mean I'm for

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Michael and Me

"I saw you in Fahrenheit 9/11 and really liked what you did! Do you know Michael Moore? It was a powerful movie," said my friend at the gym.

"Hi, I worked with you 20 years ago and just called to compliment you on your performance."

Since the opening of "Fahrenheit 9/11" I've had phone calls, TV and newspaper interviews and people stopping me at the gym. How did this happen?

About a month after Sept. 11, some of us in the gym were discussing 9/11, Bush, Bin Laden, Afghanistan and oil profits. Someone said, "bin Laden is really an asshole for murdering those people," I said, "That's true, but he will never be as big an asshole as Bush, who bombs all over the world for oil profits."

A week later I received a visit from the FBI. "We hear you've been talking about 9/11, Bush, Bin Laden and oil profits," they said. "Lots of people are," I replied. "You now you live in the U.S.," they said, "and are entitled to freedom of speech." "Thanks," I said, "then that ends our discussion and goodbye!" and I shut the door. They didn't return.

Then I called friends at PUEBLO, the National Lawyers Guild and the ACLU to tell them what had happened. They said the FBI had visited a number of people since 9/11. This is a fascist/racist attack, especially on Middle-Eastern (Arab/Moslem) and South Asian workers and students. Many were arrested, some jailed without legal counsel and some were even deported.

My report to several organizations was placed on the Internet and a number of TV, radio and newspaper reporters picked it up. And that's how Michael Moore found out about my story and sent his people to interview me several months ago about my experience with the FBI.

As I discovered, some individual reporters may be liberal and friendly but we should never forget, the media is owned by and serves the capitalist ruling class.

In "Fahrenheit 9/11," Moore criticizes Bush, his election, his ties with bin Laden and the Iraq oil war. But remember, he endorsed Wesley Clark for President and strengthened the case to vote for Kerry. Kerry wants 40,000 more soldiers in Iraq and a more fascist program of National Service that would strengthen the Patriot Act.

Even after being in Progressive Labor Party for a number of years and knowing some of capitalism's tricks, I was flattered by the attention from the movie. But fame is fleeting under capitalism. The media knows you today and tomorrow they're gone. Most importantly, we need to build a mass, revolutionary PLP that values every single worker as it wages a fight for communist equality. Every single worker counts and helps to build this movement.

Look at the hit the mass reformist civil rights struggle took after Malcolm X and Martin Luther King and others were murdered. The ruling class can murder individual leaders, but it can never murder a movement that is of the workers, by the workers and for the workers. Nor can we afford "cults" which put leaders like Stalin and Mao above other workers. We need a PLP that values all workers and puts the entire working class first and foremost!

Keep up the good work in CHALLENGE.

WEST COAST COMRADE

Youth See Through *FAHRENHEIT 9/11*

Recently some college and high school students saw Fahrenheit 9/11. Afterwards we discussed the film over dinner. Some high school students felt it did a good job exposing how Bush's business relationship with the Saudi ruling class via the Carlyle group was an influential factor in his decision to go to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. Others thought one of the film's strongest points was how the mother of a soldier who died in Iraq changed from initially supporting the war and despising anti-war protestors to questioning the war's whole purpose. However, we also found some serious political weaknesses, particularly the way Michael Moore misrepresents the Democrats' role relative to the Republican's winning the 2000 presidency and the run-up to the war in Iraq. In one scene, Moore shows Al Gore denying support to black members of Congress who are pushing for a discussion of the disenfranchisement of black voters in Florida. In another scene, Democratic Senator Daschle is shown supporting the multi-billion-dollar bill for the invasion of Iraq.

In both cases, it seems Moore is arguing that if only the Democrats had been stronger and stood up to the Republicans, there would be a different situation today. This analysis completely misses the point. The Democrats didn't challenge the Republicans and whole-heartedly supported the war in Iraq because it was in their interest as members of the ruling class. Both parties represent that class. Despite minor tactical differences, they in no way speak for the working class, even though the Democrats say they do.

After dinner, we returned to the theater to distributed CHALLENGE to people leaving the movie. Interestingly, Democrats were there also, soliciting donations, but were largely ignored. There was more interest in our group of students handing out communist literature and buttons stating, "It's not just Bush, it's capitalism." Some people asked us for the buttons. About 200 took CHALLENGE. Some agreed with us that Kerry is not a real alternative to Bush but asked what other choice was there. We tried to explain the best option: don't vote for either one and fall into the "lesser-evil" trap but instead organize students, workers and soldiers around communist politics.

RED YOUTH

LETTERS CONTINUED

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Bush."

"But there are only two candidates and Bush is worse than Kerry."

"I'm not sure that Kerry isn't much more dangerous and perhaps actually worse."

"Why?"

"Because he's proposing to expand the war with UN support and sending more troops to Iraq."

"So you want Bush instead of Kerry?"

"It's not a question of 'want,' but one of looking at objective reality. Capitalism has certain laws of development like the falling rate of profit, the intensification of inter-imperialist rivalry, and overproduction. Now we're faced with these laws becoming much more pronounced. Whether they're Republicans or Democrats, they must respond to the need to save their empire, and they will do whatever's necessary to defend it."

RED TEACHER

Ray Charles: Good Music, Bad Politics

Some people may disagree with the following, but this is a letter of self-criticism.

When Ray Charles died recently, I liked that his death knocked the horrible Nazi Reagan's death off the front pages for a while. But I started expressing to friends a kind of sentimental sadness that this great talent Ray Charles was gone, and at a comparatively young age.

I grew up as Ray Charles became famous. I used to go to see him at the Apollo in Harlem. So I had these memories from my teens, and no one can deny Ray Charles's many talents. He became a hack as he aged, but I wanted to remember those good days. So I was playing his old records and CDs and speaking to friends about how I'd miss him, and stuff like that.

Around that time I went to a health care provider, a guy who is a left liberal, though no communist. I asked what he thought of Ray Charles dying, and he shrugged. "Well," he said, "he was a talented musician. But he was a real right-winger, all those grinning photos with presidents. And he was terrible with women." (When I told this story to another friend, he reminded me that Ray Charles had been picketed for appearing in apartheid South Africa.)

The guy was right. I knew all this, and I disagreed with Ray Charles's actions. But I let my cheap sentimentality interfere with my politics. I'll still listen to "What I Say," "I Got A Woman," all those great recordings. But I won't forget Ray Charles was an Uncle Tom who sold us all out - and I'm white.

NEW ENGLAND RED

GI's Debate Nationalism, God, Drugs, Bush/Kerry and Capitalism

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

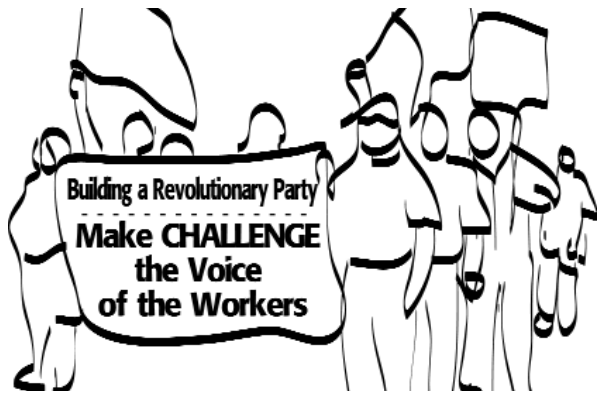
issue but my colleagues respect for the Party is growing.

One marine asked if capitalism could be blamed for people doing drugs if they know it is wrong. I answered that drugs are universal to all communities, but that some are punished more for it. I cited the Rockefeller drug laws which sentence people to five years mandatory for five grams of crack but probation for the powder equivalent (the powder being a lot more expensive). I also mentioned the privatization of prisons and the exploitative labor forced on prisoners. All of this exposes capitalism as the root of crime and punishment in the U.S. Private prisons are big business — it's the fastest growing "housing project" in the country.

The discussion moved to elections and whether voting would help. Some (excluding my black nationalist friend) felt that electing Kerry would make things better for the working class. I explained that Kerry was pro-war, that he voted to invade Iraq and Afghanistan, and that the only difference between him and Bush is tactical, not over principle. Both are committed to maintaining capitalism, to war to maintain the U.S. as the #1 imperialist and to sacrificing the blood of our class to maintain these objectives. In fact Kerry wants to sacrifice more blood by sending more troops to Iraq! I pointed out that elections under capitalism only validate the present system. Only through communist revolution can the working class truly have a voice in the affairs of the state, the workers' state!

(Next: a Party study group begins.)

Navy Red



RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION:Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

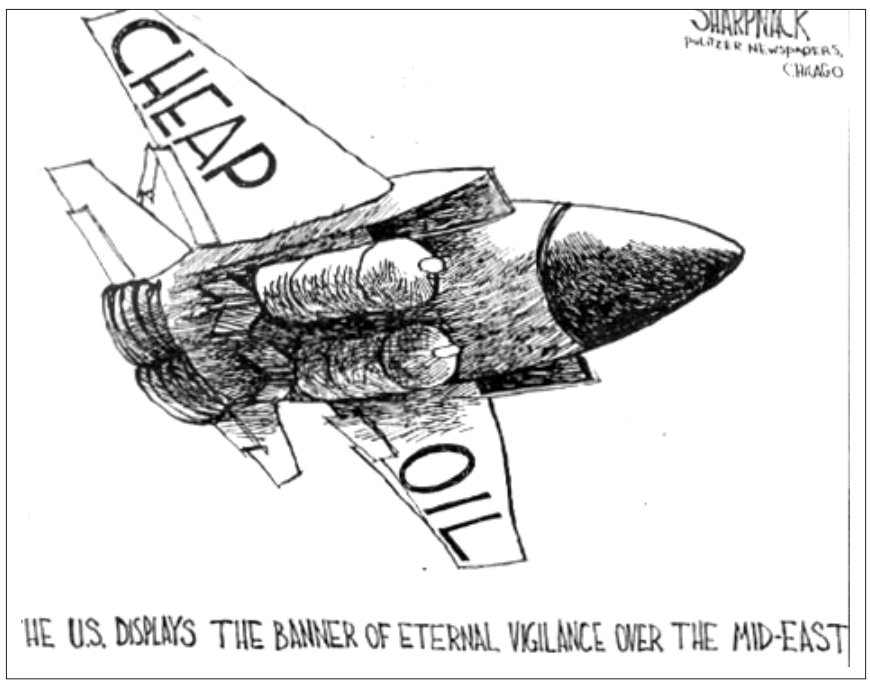
Destroy Iraq to save it?

Mohammed Abdullah Shahwani, Iraq's director of national intelligence, said that the Americans and the Iraqis could defeat the insurgents in Falluja but that the cost would be great indeed.

"We could take the city," he said, "but we would have to kill everyone in it." (NYT, 7/8)

Half of Black men jobless

When the Community Service Society looked at the proportion of the working-age population with jobs in New York City it found that nearly half of all black men between the ages of 18 and 64 were not working last year. That's a Depression-era statistic. (NYT, 7/16)



Taliban may be out, but...

The vast majority of Afghan women still wear burqas, seen by many in the West as a symbol of Taliban oppression. The girls' soccer team at Zarghoona High School has to practice secretly….

The gap between the claims of Mr. Rumsfeld and others and the reality on the ground was vividly illustrated by a British patrol last month that stopped to talk to the malik, or village chief, of a mud-walled settlement on the edge of Kabul. After complaining about the shortage of wells, the malik assured the patrol's commander that "life is much better than it was under the Taliban." When asked how, the malik had to think hard. "We can watch videos," he said finally. Then he added: at least we could if we had television. Or electricity." Keen to please his visitors, he thought again. "Our girls can go to school," he said, then once more frowned. "Only there is no school." (NYT, 7/5)

$ystem kills Africa health

…Thousands of African nurses stream away from their AIDS-haunted continent for rich countries, primarily Britain.

The nursing staffs of public health systems across the poor countries of Africa — grossly insufficient to begin with — are being battered….

It is the poor subsidizing the rich, since African governments paid to educate many of the health care workers who are leaving….

African nurses are also migrating, though in smaller numbers, to the United States…There are now more than 3,100 registered nurses from Africa in the United States.

….The pressure to recruit abroad is likely to grow….

"I think it will destroy the whole system," Dr.Kathyola said. (NYT, 7/12)

US prisons also abuse

According to insider accounts, national experts, lawyers and numerous recent investigations, prison conditions in this country are little better than at Abu Ghraib, Prisoners are regularly beaten, both by guards and other inmates, in crowded wards. Sexual predators, both guards and inmates, are given free rein to terrorize other prisoners. Moreover, the health care system is often horrifically inadequate.

None of this legal….The inmate population tends to suffer from greater levels of chronic diseases, such as heart diseases and cancer, and infectious diseases, including hepatitis C and AIDS, than the general population….Providing adequate medical care costs money….

Rather than pay, prison officials overlook hepatitis C and other diseases as long as possible, frequently discharging infected prisoners without treating or sometimes even telling them. According to a study sponsored by the National Institute for Justice, inmates released from prison or jail account for 35% of the US population with tuberculosis and 17% of those infected with AIDS. In 1996 alone, nearly 1.4 million people infected with hepatitis C were released from prison — untreated. (Life Extension, Aug. '04)

Cosby rant helps the rich

Cosby has been attacking the…poor for a range of sins….As for the black youth who so exercise Cosby, their pregnancy rates aren't "soaring," as he reportedly claimed; in fact, they're lower than they've been in decades. Ditto with crime rates. And if Cosby's worried about poor grammar and so forth, why isn't he ranting about the…budget….

Younger black America today is struggling admirably against massive disinvestments in schools, terrible unemployment, harsh policing and degrading prejudices,…They deserve respect, not grown-up tantrums. (NYT , 7/8)

DESPITE U.S. BOSSES' AID TO HITLER, RED ARMY CRUSHED NAZIS

(In our7/7 issue we described how U.S. bosses set up shop in Nazi Germany, reaping huge profits from the fascists' assault on the working class, while trying to push Hitler to attack the Soviet Union.)

SOVIETS PUT A CRIMP IN NAZI/WESTERN GOALS

Once Hitler turned West after invading Poland in 1939, the British and French launched the Phony War, still hoping Hitler would turn east and destroy the Soviet Union. U.S. and Western bosses hated the Soviets as the "cradle of the communist counter-system to the international capitalist order," especially exposed by communism's tremendous advances while the capitalist world was mired in the Great Depression.

GM's Opel manager Mooney and U.S. ambassador in London, Joseph Kennedy (JFK's father), tried hard to persuade Germany and Britain to resolve their conflict so Hitler could turn his undivided attention eastward. Mooney told the dictator in March 1940 that the U.S. "understood" his territorial claims in the East. But Hitler turned them down — until June 22, 1941, when he launched Operation Barbarossa, invading the Soviet Union, powered by Ford and GM engines and fueled by U.S. oil companies. "Experts" in Washington and London predicted the Soviets would be crushed "like an egg" but the USSR became the first country to fight the Blitzkrieg to a standstill and then launched a December counter-offensive. Senator Harry Truman (who would succeed Roosevelt as President) said, two days after the Nazi invasion, "If we see that Germany is winning, we should help Russia, and if Russia is winning, we should help Germany, so that as many as possible perish on both sides."

When it was clear the Soviets wouldn't collapse, the U.S. offered Lend-Lease aid and later claimed this is what "saved" Moscow. But this aid was not meaningful until long after the Soviets had stopped the Nazis, and even then never exceeded 5% of the total Soviet war production. The latter manufactured its own high-quality weapons, including the T-34 tank, probably the best tank of World War II. U.S. corporate assistance to the Germans dwarfed anything sent to the Soviets.

NEW T-SHIRT!

Put forward a revolutionary line this summer at the Democratic and Republican Conventions with Progressive Labor Party's white T-Shirt that reads:

REVOLT! DON'T VOTE

SIZES: M, L, XL. Send $10 plus $1 for shipping and handling.
Check or Money Order to:CHALLENGE PERIODICALS
PO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202

U.S. BOSSES PLAY BOTH SIDES AFTER PEARL HARBOR

But despite the fact that the West and the Soviets were now allies against Hitler, U.S. bosses continued supplying the Nazi war machine, even after Pearl Harbor. Many big bosses were very influential in Washington, helping protect their business interests. Former GM president Knudson, a Hitler admirer, became director of the Office of Production Management. Edward Stettinius, another GM executive, was appointed Secy. of State, and GE president Charles Wilson became the powerful number two man at the War Production Board. Despite supposedly strict laws against "trading with the enemy," barely a week after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 13, 1941 President Roosevelt discreetly issued an edict allowing U.S. corporations to do business with enemy countries — or with neutral countries that were friendly with enemies — by means of "special authorization."

U.S. bosses' even protected their plants in Nazi Germany from Allied bombing! According to German expert Hans Helms, Bernard Baruch, a high-level Roosevelt advisor, gave the order not to bomb certain factories in Germany. While Cologne's historic city centre was flattened in repeated bombing raids, the large Ford factory on the city's outskirts was hardly touched, having a reputation as the safest place in town.

Then, after the war, these U.S. firms actually received indemnification for damages suffered by their German subsidiaries. GM was awarded $33 million and ITT got $27 million. Ford wrested 38 million francs from France's Vichy regime.

U.S. TECHNOLOGY USED IN THE HOLOCAUST

IBM's advanced punch card technology, forerunner of the computer, supplied the Nazis with the Hollerith calculating machines and other tools used to "generate lists of Jews and other victims, who were then targeted for deportation" and to "register inmates [of concentration camps] and track slave labor." (Edwin Black, "IBM and the Holocaust," p. xx). IBM profited from selling the Nazis the technological tools required for identifying, deporting, ghettoizing, enslaving and ultimately exterminating millions of European Jews — for organizing the Holocaust. (Black, pp. 212, 253, 297-9)

When the bosses, Kerry, Bush and the union hacks cry patriotism to defend the profit system (Exxon, Halliburton and fascist security-mercenary companies in the case of Iraq), we must remember that workers must be loyal only towards one class: the international working class and its revolutionary red flag. Our goal is to fight ALL capitalist war-makers. The rulers parade their phony "patriotism" before U.S. workers to win backing for the war on Iraq and future wars in the bosses' drive for world domination.

We must also remember that even though the Nazis had at their disposal all of Europe's industrial might plus the aid of U.S. corporations, and four million soldiers who invaded the Soviet Union, they were no match for the communist-led Red Army. It was also communists who led the fight against the fascist repression of the Nazis, Mussolini and the Japanese imperial army, both on the front lines in the Soviet Union and China as well as in the partisan movement behind the lines in virtually every country invaded by the Axis powers. This destroyed another myth: that fascism would end the class struggle.

Today, the imperialists and capitalists give us endless wars, mass unemployment, famines and fascist/racist terror, which is why workers must fight to rebuild the international communist movement, learning from both its great past achievements and errors. Then the slogan "Workers of the World, Unite" can become a reality. Join and build the PLP to fight for a society without bosses — for communism.

(Sources: see Part I, CHALLENGE, 7/7)

Frida Kahlo Died Honoring Communism

July 13 marked the 50th anniversary of the death of Frida Kahlo. Today, after being forgotten for many years, she's become an international superstar — sparking what some call Fridomania — as well as a particular symbol for the women's movement worldwide.

But Frida was more than a feminist. She was an active member of the old Communist Party of Mexico (CPM), while reflecting all the contradictions of the old international communist movement.

Although there's been several books and movies about her — the most famous being "Frida" by Salma Hayek — for decades after her death in 1954, her achievements were basically buried until a few years ago. Most people believed she only had produced a couple of paintings, instead of the 200 known so far.

A Reuters dispatch quotes Martha Zamora, Frida's biographer, as saying that because of her CPM membership, Mexico's cultural establishment was happy to see her name die. They couldn't forgive the fact that her coffin was draped with the communist flag while people sang the working class anthem The Internationale at her funeral.

"In the '70s, her name was revived by the feminist movement that looked on her as their symbol," said Ms. Zamora. "A Los Angeles journalist actually came to Mexico to interview her, only to discover she had died in 1954. The feminists realized then that there was no official interest in Frida."

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera at a New Workers School

But things have changed. Now Frida is as famous as her communist husband, the muralist Diego Rivera (who infuriated Rockefeller when he painted Lenin's face in a mural at NYC's Rockefeller Center).

A museum at the Blue House, where Frida was born and died of pneumonia at 47, has now become very popular among Mexicans and foreign tourists. "I am attracted to her paintings as well as her life," said nurse Silvia Rojas as she left the museum; "a woman ahead of her time who overcame many illness and gave her love to Diego Rivera."

Contrary to Trotsky who betrayed the Soviet Union, and with whom Frida supposedly had an affair as revenge for Diego's affairs, Frida remained loyal to the world's first communist-led state. In her final days, after her leg had been amputated from a gangrene infection, Frida's last public appearance was at a communist party-led demonstration against the overthrow of Guatemala President Jacobo Arbenz. The CIA led an armed revolt against him when he tried to nationalize the U.S.-owned banana plantations. Since then, hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants, mainly Mayans, have been killed by the death-squad rulers of Guatemala. She also supported Stalin, despite all the anti-communist slanders the international bourgeoisie (and Trotsky) heaped on him. The last painting Frida was working on when she died was a portrait of Stalin.

Frida wasn't perfect, but her heart was in the right place, on the side of the international working class fighting for a world without capitalism.✪